

EUROPE'S GREAT CRISIS.  
THE CONCERTED MOVEMENT TO LOWER BRITISH PRESTIGE.

Remarkable interview with a Russian Statesman—And Hated in Russia by Government and People—His Visit to England for the Turkish Question—The Alliance Between Russia, France, and Germany—Against England—Meeting of the British Cabinet to Consider the Matter—The German Kaiser's Quarrel with England.

Special Cable Despatch to The Sun.

LONDON, Jan. 11.—It is important not to confuse the view taken by the British Government with the view of the situation which the British Cabinet today. It should be borne in mind that the recent events in South Africa are politically important only in their bearing upon the European crisis which they have served to accentuate.

It may be assumed that it was England's position before the world at large which occupied the attention of Lord Salisbury and his colleagues. I venture to assume also that the momentous question which the British Government present moment amounts to this: Shall England abandon her traditional policy of complete independence and enter into an alliance with certain foreign powers, or shall she fight Europe?

This is no strained and alarmist epitome of the situation. It is the view taken by all calm and intelligent observers of the events of the past three years. There is no need to point out to the readers of these despatches that the facts which months ago made it evident that a concerted movement was in progress which had for its object the lowering of British prestige throughout the world, are already being put into effect. It is not only in the far East. It has paralyzed British influence in the Orient. It has begun its work in Africa. It has been a diplomatic and commercial combination. It has used only diplomatic and commercial weapons. There has been nothing in its tactics that it has not done in its programme. I do not believe, in spite of the events of the past few days, that war has been added to its plan. If war comes it will be because England herself believes that the sword is the only effective weapon of defence she can use. She has indicated this week, by acts which speak for her, that she is not only prepared, but willing to use this weapon unless the campaign against her is abandoned. In fact, she is forcing the game more rapidly than her opponents desire.

Russia is unquestionably the leader of the movement. She has not only admitted, but she has openly admitted, that she is the greatest power in the world. She is contained in a long interview with the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, which gives great prominence to the speaker. The speaker is not named, but he has been identified by the British press as the Russian statesman, Count Benckendorff. First he throws the responsibility for the Armenian massacres and the deadlock of the powers upon England. He says:

"To coerce the Sultan we should have been prepared to go to extremes. The fact that the war would have meant the complete overthrow of the Turkish empire. To break up the Ottoman empire without first making satisfactory arrangements for its redistribution would have been silly, suicidal, for it would have been tantamount to war, and having said Turkey we should have had to fight it out between ourselves immediately afterward."

"This Russia was not minded to do. The only way to avoid that would have been to come to an understanding with some other power beforehand, so that the disposal of Turkey's remains could not be called in question later on by those who might be disappointed."

"Now, this understanding was impossible, and it was rendered impossible by England's standing aloof. An arrangement might have been arrived at with France. But France and Russia could not afford to fight the rest of Europe for territory which we can very well afford to wait for. With Germany, too, it would have been possible to come to terms had she not been hampered with Austria and the Triple Alliance; but as that put Germany out of court, we found ourselves, if we ventured to take up the cudgels for the Armenians, on one of the horns of a dilemma, either the diplomatic humiliation embodied in Turkey's refusal to listen to our representations, or else first a war with the Turks and Kurds, then a bloody war with more than half of Europe."

Coming to the question of English isolation, he says:

"I hold that in modern political Europe isolation or self-sufficiency, call it as you will, is only for countries like Portugal and Belgium, certainly not for first-class powers whose mutual jealousies are such that they are at all times ready to unite against one whom they have not, or hate, if that one happens to be single-handed."

Describing the growth of Russian hatred of England, his words are:

"Our Teutonic neighbors who, a couple of years ago, were unrepentant unpopularity in Russia, have pulled themselves together, and by dint of humility, servility, and ingratitude, have been able to substitute English unpopularity for that of Germany. With one or two insignificant exceptions, the Russian press is virtually preaching a crusade against England. Every diplomatic snub, every reverse, every difficulty that causes pain, humiliation, or anxiety to England is welcomed by the newspapers with almost boisterous joy. Every move made by English statesmen receives the least favorable interpretation of which it is capable. Base motives are attributed to good or indifferent political acts. In a word, every thing is being done to make the name of England loathsome in the nostrils of the Russian reader."

The speaker then openly declared that the understanding between Russia, France, and Germany is complete. He even says:

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"As for Germany, it would be superfluous for me to recapitulate all she has done to secure the good offices of Russia. You may possibly characterize her action as self-abandonment, but it has proved successful. No act of France and Germany is so far from the truth as to say that they were gentle in 'The Arabian Nights,' and that is an accomplished fact which must henceforth be reckoned with."

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The foregoing is evidently merely surmise on the part of the *Gazette*, and does not appear to be inspired.

THE MAN OF THE HOUR IN ENGLAND.

The Transvaal Release Has Made Mr. Chamberlain the Man of the Hour in England—His Visit to England for the Turkish Question.

Special Cable Despatch to The Sun.

LONDON, Jan. 11.—The British politicians who have regarded the Transvaal crisis from a party point of view are impressed more than by any other with the great advantage Mr. Joseph Chamberlain has derived from it. It is not too much to say that he is at this moment the most popular public man in this country. All parties regard his accession to office with misgivings, and his own personal friends and blindest partisans feared that he would lose his individuality in a Cabinet overhwhelmingly Tory and presided over by his old adversary, Lord Salisbury.

As events have unfolded, however, Mr. Chamberlain from the first aimed to assert himself. He struck out a line of policy in the conduct of colonial affairs as daring as it was novel, and this ex-republican Mayor of Birmingham, this politician who learned statesmanship in a provincial municipal school, has ex-libitum been welcomed by the British press with almost boisterous joy. Every move made by English statesmen receives the least favorable interpretation of which it is capable. Base motives are attributed to good or indifferent political acts. In a word, every thing is being done to make the name of England loathsome in the nostrils of the Russian reader."

The speaker then openly declared that the understanding between Russia, France, and Germany is complete. He even says:

"France has at our bidding consented to shelter her out political scheme which she hoped through us to realize. It was the belief that the Franco-Russian alliance meant the speedy recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, which first drew the republic to our side; and yet so misapprehension does our friendship appear to France that she has actually allowed her most cherished dream to be dispelled for the sake of cultivating it."

"As for Germany, it would be superfluous for me to recapitulate all she has done to secure the good offices of Russia. You may possibly characterize her action as self-abandonment, but it has proved successful. No act of France and Germany is so far from the truth as to say that they were gentle in 'The Arabian Nights,' and that is an accomplished fact which must henceforth be reckoned with."

Finally, these sinister words about the object of this new triple alliance: "Every political alliance is, as you know, for a time, for a short time if it happens to be unnatural, for a longer time if it answers the needs of both parties. In the present case, nothing could possibly be more unnatural than an alliance between England and Germany, who hate each other, with Russia, whose good will and assistance they are each anxious to obtain against the other. That arrangement is good only for negative purposes. It is an instrument for pulling down, not for building up, and the only power great enough to be pulled down just now is Great Britain."

THE KAISER'S UNPOPULARITY.  
He Has Only One Friend in the British Royal Family.

LONDON, Jan. 11.—The only member of the British royal family who is friendly to Emperor William is the Duke of Devonshire, and the Duke of Devonshire is friendly to the Emperor because he is the Duke of Devonshire. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York do not speak to him unless it is absolutely necessary.

The Duke of Fife, the Marquis of Lorne, and Prince Henry of Battenberg, all of whom married members of the royal family and whom the Emperor detests because they are the Emperor's friends, are also not on terms of friendship with him. Influences operating from the courts of the German States as well as from St. Petersburg are more likely to control the Emperor than English family sentiment. His Majesty's animosity toward the Duke of Fife, who married the daughter of the Emperor, is a case in point. He has something to do with his rejoicing at the collapse of the British South Africa's forces, as the Duke is connected with that campaign.

The weight of opinion seems to be that the Emperor acted on his own initiative, and not by the instigation of the Czar or anybody else. If this is true, the present situation cannot be remedied with satisfaction by the Russian Government, and the Czar's influence is likely to be used to quell the rising storm. It is certain that if Russia is really intriguing to secure an alliance with England she will not permit this quarrel to lead to hostilities until it is clearly impossible to gain the object.

The Emperor's attitude toward England is already accepted as a defiant answer to both offers of partnership and threats of force.

BRITISH CABINET MEETING.

Events at and Following the Conference of the Ministers.

Special Cable Despatch to The Sun.

LONDON, Jan. 11.—It is impossible to do more than surmise what took place at today's Cabinet meeting, and one man's guess at that point is about as good as another's.

Certain significant events followed the return of the department chiefs to their offices. The Admiralty was already as busy as though the country were actually at war.

Late this afternoon the War Department issued a similar condition of activity, but no details were given.

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